

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A portable altitude/azimuth telescope mount having an integral locator system with a magnetic encoder mechanism for facilitating location of astronomical objects and telescope positioning for observation thereof. A microprocessor receives signals from the encoder mechanism and translates such into position data for display. The locator system also includes a database of astronomical objects, including their locations and other relevant information. The mount is preferably provided with a drive mechanism adapted to allow for automatically or manually positioning the telescope to view astronomical objects and for automatically repositioning or steering the telescope in order to track the astronomical objects during extended viewing. When moved manually, components of the drive act as a clutch mechanism that effectively disengages the drive motor to avoid damage. An instance of the drive may be provided for each axis of movement.

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